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*Working Together for Student Success*

**To:** Superintendents, Principals and school leaders

**From:** Maggie Paino, Director of Accountability Indiana Department of Education

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**Subject:** Graduation Rate and the Graduation Rate Audit - How We Got Here (Installment #1)

### **Graduation Rate History**

Starting with the 2006 Cohort, the Indiana General Assembly tasked the Department of Education (DOE) with calculating the graduation rate for schools. The calculation of the State graduation rate, including valid reasons for exit, and applicable dates can be found in IC 20-26-13. This statute also tasks DOE with publishing the graduation rate by January 15.

Section 8002 of the Every Student Succeeds Act outlines the calculation of the Federal graduation rate, including valid reasons for exit and applicable dates, including the publication of the graduation rate prior to the end of the calendar year.

### **Graduation Rate Audit History**

Prior to the 2017 Cohort, schools were selected for the mandatory graduation rate audit based on a formula that chose schools with the highest mobility rates. During the 2017 session of the General Assembly, this formula was eliminated in favor of auditing ALL high schools on a schedule of the DOE's choosing (IC 20-26-13-11(b)). Furthermore, IC 20-26-13-11(c) requires the DOE to return to the cohort, as a dropout, any student for whom the school does not supply documentation supporting the exit. Although not statutorily required, the DOE has traditionally held a voluntary graduation rate audit during the same time frame to allow schools to correct issues with the cohort.

### **Next Installment**

Next week's installment will cover important definitions for understanding cohort and graduation rates.